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ALASKALAND



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Hunting Ptarmigan on the Bering Sea Coast, Alaska,
during the Food Famine of 1913.
(Picture taken by Eskimo boy.)

ALASKALAND

A CURIOUS CONTRADICTION

BY

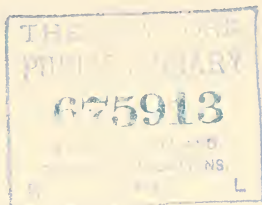
ISABEL AMBLER GILMAN, LL.B.

(Of the Washington and Alaska Bar)

AUTHOR OF "ECHOES FROM THE GRANGE"



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NEW YORK
JUL 1914
Y. A. 391

TO

THAT HONORABLE BODY OF MEN,
THE FIRST TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE OF
ALASKA, WHOSE FIRST LEGISLATIVE ACT
GAVE TO THEIR SISTER EMPIRE-BUILDERS
THE FULL POWER OF POLITICAL
REPRESENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

FOREWORD

Many have been the letters received during a four years' sojourn in the Northland, asking for information in regard to this or that particular place, and expressing a desire to visit Alaska. Thousands of other people are continually wondering what there is in Alaska to attract and hold persons of refined taste,—why they endure the hardships and lonesomeness of the borderland when they might be living in ease amid the comforts of civilization. This little Souvenir of the Lureland is an endeavor to portray the appeal of the shores of Alaska between Ketchikan and the Kuskokwim, as well as to answer all inquiries.

It is easy to see Alaska. To know it one must winter in the wild. Only those who have dwelt beyond the borders of traffic, cut off from all communication with fellow beings for long periods of time, can fully understand the power of Nature in her "silent places."

The author gratefully acknowledges the kindness of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the *North-West Journal of Education*, *The Westerner*, the

FOREWORD

Alaska-Yukon Magazine, the *Alaska Daily Despatch*, the *Seward Gateway* and the Valdez newspapers in permitting the appearance in this volume of poems previously printed in these publications.

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ALASKALAND

ALASKA

The Last of the Lands to be Conquered

FOR ever and ever I slumbered on
Through the countless years of the unsung
past,
Remote from the world and its hustling throng,
The jewels of God in my heart locked fast
Till the great white czar of the northern zone
The bars of my glacial prison broke.
He made me the bride of his polar throne
And my torpid soul from its slumber woke.

But the great white czar was a lover cold,
And safe in my bosom God's rich gems lay.
Ah! little he knew when his bride he sold
The worth of the dower he cast away.
And little the man of the Southland knew,
When his minions scoffed at my pale white face,

That thousands would yield to my charms and
woo,

And women shrink not from my chill embrace.

A land of surprises and hardships,—

Men seek it and hasten away:

They rob it and curse it and leave it,

Then bring back their loved ones and stay.

O many have sneered at my frozen crust!

And weaklings and rogues have reviled my
name;

They bartered their souls for my golden dust

And left in my valleys the trails of shame.

But men who are noble and clean and wise,

And women content in their cabins lone

With the sweet babes born 'neath my radiant
skies,

Are building a nation around my throne,

And theirs are the jewels I've kept so long

In trust for the race who would conquer me,

Love me,—the honest, the brave, the strong,—

For them and my citizens yet to be.



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“WONDER-WALLED AND TREASURE-STORED.”

O I've room for millions, and millions more!

My valleys are fertile and rich and wide;
The school bells are ringing on every shore,
And the Southland ships in my harbors ride.

Black-ripe are my fuel-filled veins and seams,

My waters are swarming with food for man,
And the banks and beds of a thousand streams
Are calling for shovel and pick and pan.

The peace which charms and the health which
thrills,

The spell of my landscape sublimely grand
And the wealth of my sunlit vales and hills
Are waiting for them in the fair Northland.

A land of allurement and promise,

Bold venture and strenuous deed,

Where dreams have a chance of fulfilment

And Almighty God is our creed.

THE MESSAGE

THE air is full of witching spells,
Of lure-songs sweet and clear;
The wind is ever whispering
Strange secrets to the ear;
In psalm and symphony divine
The voice of Nature sings,
The boreal rainbow of the night
A wealth of knowledge brings;
And these the mysteries which flash
Across the poet's brain
And strike the keyboard of the soul,
Producing a refrain,—
A song of Hope for hero-hearts,
A melody sublime,—
Alaska's message to the world
In garb of prose and rhyme.

THE RELIEF OF POINT BARROW

“**A** STORY! a story!” the children cried
As they crowded round my chair,
“And we’ll write it down in our history books,—
We’ve got room for another there.
A tale of the wilderness, teacher, *please!*
And we’ll write it word for word.”
And this is the story I told them of
The chief and his reindeer herd.

.

“Once, a young man went to teach
The savage Eskimo,
And he built a school at Cape Prince of Wales,
More than twenty years ago.
Patient and kind and fearless,
He dwelt in the desert drear,
And the savages loved the brave white chief
And tended his herds of deer.

18 THE RELIEF OF POINT BARROW

“One year the Arctic coast-line

Was swept by early gales,
And some men from a cutter fought their way
To the schoolhouse at Cape Wales.

*Drive your reindeer to Point Barrow,
Their fateful message ran,
Whalers frozen in and starving;
Reach them, save them if you can.*

“So wrote the great white Father,

And native hearts were stirred.
Yielding their treasures with glad accord,
They gathered the mighty herd.
Two hundred men were starving
In the northern solitude,
And the chief must cross the barrier ice
And take the deer for food.

“Forth on that dreadful journey

The dauntless teacher goes,
And his young white wife and her babes are left
Alone 'mong the Eskimos.

Four hundred deer are moving,
When fades the polar day,
O'er a trackless waste to an Arctic camp
Seven hundred miles away.

“Over the broken ice-fields,
Hugging the lifeless shore
Where the crashing bergs and the glacial drift
Pile high with a thundrous roar;
Precipice, gorge, and ridges
Where crevice and chasm hide,
And never a white man's foot hath made
A track on the mountain side.

“Over the storm-swept tundra,
Seared by the blizzard's breath,
Blinded and stabbed by the icy grit,
They traverse the plains of Death;
Fighting wolves in the night time,
Sixty degrees below,
Or a bed of fur while the reindeer dig
For supper beneath the snow.

20 THE RELIEF OF POINT BARROW

“Over the unknown desert

Hemmed in by ice-walled space,
Past igloo-hovels where hibernate
The dregs of a torpid race.

Fifty-five days of struggle,
Torture and rack and stress,—
A conqueror carrying life and hope
Through the primal wilderness,

“Answering the call of duty,

Fortune and fate defied;
There is no retreat, and he scorns defeat,
And the Reaper stalks beside.

The weary deer are slaughtered
The starving crews to save,
And the spectral Reaper sheathes his sword
And flees from the yawning grave.

“God counts not rank nor boasting,

What heroes own or wear;
When he tests a man in the wilderness
The heart and the soul are bare.

That teacher did his duty
Up by the Arctic Sea.
Now write your stories and place his name
Where you think it ought to be.”

.

The children had listened with glowing eyes
And never a thought of play;
They quietly bent o'er their history books
And wrote till the close of day.
I looked through their stories at eventide,
And there, at the very top
Of the hero-list on each scroll of fame
Was the name of young Chief Lopp.

THE ASHES OF KODIAK

A WARM, sunny afternoon in early June. The Russian mothers of Old Kodiak sat knitting by their open windows, toddling babes playing at their feet, tea kettles singing on the stoves, and outside on the green lawns merry children raced about in happy contentment. Neatly fenced gardens showed signs of abundant fruitage; bloom was thick upon the salmonberry and huckleberry bushes on the hillsides where cattle browsed and flocks of sheep wandered among their rich pasturage. Industrious hens cackled in the barnyards, domestic pets basked in the sunlight, and afar off hordes of red salmon were seeking their accustomed haunts to spawn in the fresh-water streams.

A beautiful picture it was, the winding streets, white cottages with red roofs and emerald lawns, the quaint old Russian church upon the knoll, warehouses, wharves and stores along the water-

front, the barrabaras of native town lining the shore in one direction, and the big cannery buildings hugging it in the other, the silvery bay with its wooded islands and headlands, and beyond it all, like a gigantic wall protecting it from the rough waters of Shelikof Strait, rose the dark rugged mountains whose peaks kissed the sky. Surely no fairer sight ever greeted the eye of man in that far northwestern land.

Strange noises broke the peacefulness of that perfect day, noises the like of which had never been heard in Kodiak before, and a large black cloud rose from behind the western heights.

Was the Revenue Cutter in the harbor firing off cannon, or was somebody blasting rock? Why was the blue sky turning black?

Children left their play to ask questions. Americans told them it was thundering, but the Russian mothers had never heard thunder before and could not explain. With blanching cheeks and trembling hands the women pushed aside their teacups, picked up their babes and watched the pall-like apparition slowly spreading across the

face of heaven. Like a monster human hand with drooping fingers it rose above them, extending and enlarging until the dome of the firmament was obscured and only a fringe of sunlight smiled from its inky edges; then a red glare shot up from the western heights, and long rumbling reverberations shook the ground. Visiting neighbors started in terror for their own homes, children clinging to their skirts.

"It's raining, mother, raining *ashes*," whispered the little ones.

Ashes it was, fine, hard particles of ground rock falling like a shower of snow over the doomed town. By six o'clock a pitchy darkness reigned everywhere, broken occasionally by great tongues of flame which slit the ash-laden cloud and were quickly swallowed up again in the dense down-pour. Peal after peal of thunder deafened the horrified people, then the church-bell rang and scores of worshippers lighted lanterns and groped their way through the falling ashes to the house of God, confident that the good priest would explain the catastrophe and tell them what to do.

So he did. That night the Russian and native population of Kodiak went to rest trusting in the God of their fathers that the terrible shower from the volcano would cease and all be well. But the rooms were close and full of sulphurous fumes. Down the chimneys came the dust, filling the flues and putting out the fires. Through every crack and crevice it filtered, powdering the food in the pantries, getting into the eyes of the watchers, the noses and throats of the sleepers, settling over the furniture until every article was white as with sprinkled flour. Children cried for water, but the water burned their throats. The opening of doors and windows only let in more ashes and poisonous gases. There was nothing to do but wait and pray.

Nights are short and dawn comes early in that far land in June, but in vain they waited; for the people of Kodiak there was no tomorrow. When the hands of the clocks pointed to ten a hazy redness seemed to appear in the eastern sky, but blackness quickly settled down again and many doubted if their eyes had not deceived them.

Again the church-bell rang for prayers, and again the bravest of the faithful struggled to the holy temple.

"Snow comes to Kodiak in winter and melts away," said the priest, "but this is everlasting snow which melteth not. God in His wisdom hath seen fit to send it for some purpose which we in our blindness cannot see. Let us have faith in Him and He will lead us to safety."

Back to their desolate homes went the worshippers, obedient to the priest's commands. Mothers hushed their little ones and gave them food; men cared for the stock as best they could; and so Black Friday passed and another day of darkness began.

The steamship *Dora* was long past due from the westward; the wireless station on Wood Island had burned; suffering for lack of drinking water had become intense, and still no indications of cessation in the steady downpour of white dust, now a foot in thickness over the surface of the island. No wonder the mothers of Kodiak thought the end of the world had come. Food-

less, fireless, the roofs of their dwellings sagging with the weight of ashes, the fate of the absent workers unknown,—for the great majority of the men of Kodiak were away at the other end of the island,—they waited in dumb despair. As a last resort they were ordered on board the revenue cutter at the dock.

The church-bell tolled the signal to abandon homes, the cutter's whistle blew to guide them to the wharf. With wet bandages over mouths and nostrils, babes in arms and lamps or lanterns in hands, with sobbing, coughing children clinging to their skirts, the half-frenzied Russian mothers of Kodiak, blinded by dust and choked by sulphurous fumes, struggled through the powdery ashes to where the *Manning* lay. Dazed with suffering, they crouched in the narrow space assigned them on board the densely crowded ship, while heroic seamen washed and rewashed the decks and ministered to their dire needs as best they could. Four hundred and fifty-nine refugees were fed and cared for, but the relief ship was too heavily loaded to move far from the wharf.

The steamship *Dora* came not. Caught in the blinding shower of the first evening as she plowed through Shelikof Strait right under the belching crater, with officers and crew nigh suffocated with noxious gases, sails and decks scorched by the fiery rain, she fought her way toward the narrow entrance of Kodiak harbor in vain, then struggled for the open sea, freighted with hot pumice and volcanic ash.

Patiently the sufferers endured. Just when hope seemed flickering and the last shred of courage gone a hazy brightness appeared in the east.

Was dawn coming at last? They hardly dared to hope.

It was ten o'clock on Sunday morning. Ashes were still falling, but the impenetrable cloak of inky blackness which had enveloped them for the past sixty-five hours appeared to be lifting. With aching eyes the people watched the thinning cloud. Slowly, slowly daylight increased until outlines of wharves and warehouses became visible. Lighter and lighter it grew, but oh, what a picture met the eyes of the watchers! Not a blade of green was

to be seen anywhere. A dense stillness prevailed. Far as the eye could reach stretched a dusty covering of whitish-gray eighteen inches in thickness. Every leaf and twig bore its load of ashes. Beautiful Kodiak of emerald hue had disappeared, and in its place a gray Sahara sloping downward from black-browed heights to the muddy waters of the harbor, and out over the headlands and islands—away to the distant horizon—stretched the leaden sheet. Not a sign of life visible anywhere except on the cutter and tugs alongside.

A boat was lowered into the muddy water and a party of men went ashore to investigate. Silently the watchers waited their return. At last they came in a cloud of floury dust and reported to the commander of the *Manning*.

Roofs had caved in, chimneys were damaged, chickens, birds and fish were dead, but some of the stock were still alive. If the cutter would furnish water, home would be best for the people. And home the people went. The humane and gallant officer who had sheltered them in the hours of their worst peril sent them ashore as fast as

they desired to go. They had all suffered alike. The God of their fathers had punished them for some cause unknown, but had not abandoned them, and they would still trust Him.

Sorrowfully the weary people mushed through the strange snow to their ruined cottages, dug out the garden paths, scraped the ashes from roofs and doorsteps, and took up the thread of their painful existence, while a boat went speeding northward to notify the world of their safety, and ask for food for man and beast.

Long afterwards they learned the true cause of their disaster. The top of Mt. Katmai on the mainland had blown off, several thousand feet of mountain had been precipitated into the air, and the dust had been carried by the winds over an area of some three thousand square miles, the heaviest portion crossing Shelikof Strait and descending on the island of Kodiak. Portions of that same terrible shower fell on the decks of steamships as far east as Vancouver harbor and as far northwest as St. Lawrence Island in Bering Sea.

THE CALL OF ALASKA

IT'S good to be home in Seattle, but somehow
I cannot rest,
And my thoughts are forever straying back there,
to the great Northwest.
I'm weary of noise which is discord—weary of
quarrels of men—
And always the voice of the Northland calling,
and calling again.
The spell of the wild is upon me, gripping and
haunting the mind
Till the soul is torn with a longing for the *peace*
which was left behind.
Ever again, in my dreaming, I am sailing the
Inland seas,
And hearing the tale of Alaska told by the whisper-
ing breeze,
By the lonely isle in the Narrows where the grave
of the chieftain lay,

By the ceaseless roaring of Treadwell, and the
wreckage which strews the way;

By the thunders of crackling icebergs that are
born of wild Taku

And sail away like a phantom fleet as the *Humboldt*
crunches through;

By the ranges of untouched mountains that pass
with the distant shore

Till the rhythmic sway of the ocean lulls me to
slumber once more,

And I gather the golden treasures where no human
foot hath trod,

And pause on the brink of the Great Beyond
where the spirit knows its God.

.

There's wealth in the wilds of Alaska, wealth
which will never be found,

If pleasure is measured by nuggets, or riches dug
out of the ground.

GOING BACK

THEY say I'm a fool for going back to that
horrible place up there,
To leave this home for a lonely shack on the
tundra bleak and bare,
To waste my life 'mong the Eskimos in that ter-
rible frozen land,
And *why* I should want to rough it again, they
cannot quite understand.

Last night, as we sat at a game of cards, o'er
music and joke and laugh
And the noisy clang of the passing cars, the screech
of a phonograph
And whistle and toot of ferry and tug, came the
voice of a Northland boat,
And I lost the game, for my eyes grew blurred
and a lump rose in my throat.

Alaska is calling me back again; she's tugged at
my heart all day.

These comforts and pleasures, you're welcome to,
but I must up and away—

Away to the land of a thousand charms, which a
city-slave cannot see,

Where the mind is calmed, and the soul expands,
and the heart grows strong and free.

There are few, indeed, who can understand the
things they have never known,

Or measure the yearning of loyal hearts when the
Northland calls its own.

O a beautiful place is Easy Street, but it's lost
its grip on me;

And I'll take my chance in a shack—with God—
on the shores of Bering Sea.

THE PASSING OF THE *BERTHA*

IT was the last night of the Golden Potlatch. For a week Seattle had been resplendent in gala array, her whole business section draped in bunting, and Alaska's colors of white, gold and black entwined among the red, white and blue. Street corners were busy industrial booths, electric-light pillars strange totem poles. Inside the big show windows, great chunks of quartz-seamed glacial mountains and snow-banked placer fields, where nuggets as large as eggs rested in pans beside picks and shovels, defied the southern sun and hypnotised the rural innocents. Across each down-town street floated thousands of star-spangled banners, Washington streamers and Alaskan pennants; while inside the white cable lines, separating sidewalk from street, stentorian-voiced vendors of alluring souvenirs pushed their way through the endless throngs, and hideous potlatch bugs crawled over everything.

36 THE PASSING OF THE *BERTHA*

The gold ship from the north had come and gone. The famous elephants had paraded the streets, followed by seemingly interminable processions. There were the visiting fraternity men in uniforms, the boys from Uncle Sam's battle-ships in the harbor, the state militia—marching as only trained men can, in perfect time to the accompanying bands. The fire department had done their bravest and best; the mail carriers had won vociferous cheers, and the rubber-men had fallen all over each other time and time again, to the great delight of the little children. Wonderful floats depicting almost every trade in the State had sailed by on wheels; birdmen had skimmed the heavens and dropped out in the bay, to be picked up by passing boats or float upon the surface of the Sound in perfect safety. By night the city had been a marvel of brilliance,—lighted by millions of incandescent bulbs of varying shades and ever-changing colors.

Tonight the streets were busier than ever, the whole country around having emptied itself into the city to witness the final event of the big pot-

latch. From the grand stand down to Pioneer Square it seemed as if one could walk on the heads of the excursionists, so thickly were they packed together. Every down-town car carried twice its legitimate load of passengers, and an endless stream of automobiles were headed for the water front, already densely lined with wearers of the gold and white. Tugs, ferryboats and harbor craft, gay with bunting and crowded to their utmost capacity, slowly approached the docks, already packed with expectant humanity.

The evening was cool and calm, one of those perfect nights when residents of the Sound cities stay outdoors because it is too beautiful to go into the houses. Everywhere bands of music were playing and the people eagerly alert for the fireworks and the last great scene of an exciting week.

Amid all the surrounding festivity, the little steamship *Bertha* lay at her accustomed place at the Grand Trunk Dock, loading lumber and general cargo for the westward. As she was scheduled to sail at eight o'clock, the passengers were

38 THE PASSING OF THE *BERTHA*

all on board, but still the big cranes lowered boxes and sacks into her holds, and gangs of tired men piled lumber around her promenade decks until all view from her stateroom windows was obscured. Iron pipes, steel rails, anchor chains were lashed on her hurricane deck aft; crates of live chickens and boxes of perishable fruits and vegetables piled amidships; then high into the air swung the boxed cattle for her forward deck, and baled hay for fodder.

A parrot in a cage watched the proceedings from the top of a pile of boxes, and half a dozen dogs were kenneled near the cattle. Dressed poultry, sides of fresh beef, mutton, and veal hung from iron hooks astern, sheeted over with clean burlap. Boxed mirrors and crated window-glass were wedged in between the ventilators on the upper deck, while the few feet of space in social hall were filled with suitcases and bundles.

Overhead millions of twinkling stars peeped out of the darkening heavens, and smiled at the millions of tinted sparks which lit the terraced hills around the shores of Elliot Bay, where the

big battleships and Luna Park were outlined in blazes of shimmering splendor against the sombre base of West Seattle.

The passengers' baggage was next hauled on board and deposited in the middle hold; then the men started in on a mammoth pile of empty salmon boxes, while the freight agent walked up and down the dock, with a word of encouragement here and a helping touch there, hurrying the weary workers, who had neither eyes nor ears for the gay scenes ashore. Meanwhile the passenger agent was shaking hands with the ladies, all crowded on the starboard side of the upper deck watching the fireworks, a series of star-spangled banners shot forth from rockets, which spread out in the sky and discharged showers of gleaming sparks upon the water.

At last the empty boxes were all in the steamship's holds, and the going ashore bell was sounded. As the visitors hurriedly departed, an officer in uniform crossed the platform and ascended the gangway. He was the captain of the *Bertha*, and his trained eye took in all details at

a glance. Few and decisive were the words he spoke. The gangplank was slung on board, the lines let go, and the brave little steamship, freighted with six hundred tons of cargo and a hundred and fifty human souls, moved slowly from the wharf and glided into the maze of lights and shadows.

A few seconds of silence, then the guns of Uncle Sam's battleships heralded the approach of the Grand Tyee.

The *Bertha's* parting whistle mingled with the din of scores of beating drums, and cheers from thousands of human throats, as a gaily decorated and richly illuminated boat shot out from the shore ahead, right in the path of the steamship. For a moment the great searchlights on the warships played upon the scene; then came a terrific explosion, and the gold ship of the Grand Tyee went heavenward in a burst of crimson flame, accompanied by the boom of cannon and the clash of military bands.

It was a spectacular and gorgeous scene, a fitting climax to the elaborate pageant of the past

six days, and a royal farewell to the old steamship now bound for the westward, which had played such an important part in the development of the Northland.

"More people in that crowd than you'll find between here and Siberia, natives included," said one of the passengers.

"Hello, Jim! Going back again?" exclaimed an old gentleman in gray suit and white linen, turning his back on the dimming splendor.

"Yes, the fever's got me, Judge," answered the tall northerner in musical drawl. "Can't seem to stand the everlasting racket of this city life; it hurts my head. People too thick on the ground; can't move without stepping on somebody's toes. So much brainless nonsense buzzing in a fellow's ears that he can't hear himself think. Everybody trying to persuade you to buy something you don't need; money goes like water. Every window's a temptation, every door a trap. Oh, I ain't kicking at your civilization, Judge. It's all right for them as is used to it, but, I reckon I'm spoiled. It's me for God's country again."

"Why, I thought *this* was God's country!" said a lady, turning from the little group at the rail, and smiling up at the man in the dark-blue flannel negligée, open at the throat.

"It is, to fair ladies like you, marm," replied he, baring his head with the grace of a courtier. "But I was thinking of a little cabin under a saw-tooth ridge, where the pearly sky never darkens at this time of the year, and the violets are as thick as grass. Back of that cabin there's a waterfall which sings me to sleep at night, and a fellow never gets lonesome there, for it's all peace and quiet."

"But haven't you any neighbors?"

"Yes, marm," said the man softly. "God is my neighbor."

"I understand," said the man in gray, speaking in low tones, to which the woman eagerly listened, her curiosity silenced, though not assuaged. "It's the same with me. Whenever I hear a Northland boat whistle in the night, I feel a thousand strings pulling me back to the wilderness. Yes, the call of the wild is just as plain now as it was twenty

years ago; but I've got ties down here, Jim, and you are free."

"Tell me, please, what *is* this call of the wild which draws strong men to exile in the desert," ventured the woman, but the smile had died from her lips.

"Some people think it is the soul of nature longing for companionship with the souls of men," answered the judge quietly. "When the several elements in the natural world are ripe and ready for usefulness, the imprisoned essence seeks release through the higher intelligence of humanity. The desert is a terrible place only to human cowards who lean upon their fellow mortals, and lack that spiritual stamina which oft transforms the lowliest waif into a desert king. Alaska has a way, which outsiders can not understand, of rewarding those who brave her borders. Away from the superfluities of modern complex life, one ceases to need them. Away from the ragtime and tinsel, which appear to satisfy the dwarfed mentality of city slaves, one may hear the sweeter symphonies and thrill to the more impressive anthems of tem-

pestuous nature. Many a time the exile stands on the brink of eternity and glimpses the larger life of which he is even now a part—the God-life and man-life overlapping and intermingling—which impresses him with a sense of his soul-omnipotence and enriches his being a thousand-fold. His friends pity and condemn him for his sojourn in the wild, for wasting, as it were, the best years of his life. But he who has conquered himself, held holy communion with nature, and breathed the larger life of freedom on the frontier, becomes immune to pity and condemnation. He may again take up his residence among the crowded thoroughfares of man, but nevermore can he be dominated by the needs of his physical self alone. I don't say that a man should give his whole life to solitude; he owes something to his fellow men, for I hold it the duty of every intelligent person to do something for the uplift of the race; but I do claim that a few years of roughing it on the borderland of civilization develops whatever of purity there is in his soul. It gives him physical strength and mental poise,—yes, and

a keener sense of justice, too. But he must give something of equal value to the new land. The more he gives the more he gets out of it. And he who has nothing to give but a kick and a curse, usually comes back a bankrupt. Is this your first trip, madam?"

"No! My first trip was on a floating palace. We had so much card-playing and dancing that I didn't get an opportunity to see all I desired."

Both men laughed. "My wife calls this boat an old tub."

"She's an old tub, sure enough," mused Jim, "but she's made her record, run where no modern steamer darst go, and kept it up steady. You take them floating palaces that tourists love to travel in, 'cause they can take civilization along with 'em, I reckon. Most of 'em are cracker-boxes alongside the wooden vessels built thirty years ago. Of course, they make better time and ride easier, but I ain't in any hurry and the grub's first-rate on this boat. When it comes to hitting a rock, give me the old wooden bucket every time. Guess the *Bertha* could spare a plank without

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noticing the loss, while some of them floating palaces would head straight for Davy Jones's locker."

"I have heard that the *Bertha* was so well acquainted with the Alaskan coast that she could go right up to any rock, smell at it, and back out of danger," said another passenger.

"Some truth in that," said the judge, laughing, "judging from the fact that she's still afloat after thirty years' steady service in Alaskan waters. This is her seventy-first voyage between Seattle and Kodiak. In my time she took supplies from San Francisco, and was the pioneer ship at points around Cook's Inlet. But she's too small for the passenger business now, too good for the scrap pile, and so they are going to make her over into a freighter."

"Yes," said Jim, slowly, "and when the history of southwestern Alaska is written, the little old *Bertha's* name, and that of her sister tub, the *Dora*, will occupy a whole chapter,—at least it would if a sourdough wrote it."

The passengers turned in: The man in blue

and gold paced the bridge, and out through the starlit night—and through many another starlit night, and storm and fog—the faithful old boat sailed on to the Land of Silence.

The famous Inside Passage was left behind. Witching beauty changed to terrible magnificence where the shore-line reared itself skyward, and monster glaciers twined around the base of colossal pillars upon which the star-studded firmament appeared to rest. Stately icebergs floated by in the dim haze of dawn, mocking the pilot's eyes and menacing the lives of the passengers. Great fog-clouds floated overhead, obscuring heaven's dome, and spectral derelicts swarmed around the ship. Then out into the open sea she sailed, where stretched for hundreds of miles the awful white sea wall, defiant, soul-stunning and unapproachable; and beyond it rose the mighty peaks of everlasting crystal, mist-veiled from human view when the leaden-gray of the turbulent gulf becomes a part of the colorless southern horizon, and sea and sky blend together.

The *Bertha's* load grew lighter and her pas-

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senger list scantier at each stop; her welcome was warmer, but the greeting crowds thinned out, until at last, on the madcap tides of the great Inlet, she discharged her cargo in mid-stream to the few tugs and lighters from the inhospitable and, to her, inaccessible shores.

On the thirteenth day out from Seattle, she entered the silent bay of Iliamna and plowed her way through a sea of floating pumice from the crater of Mt. Katmai. Dusk was falling, the night air chilly and heavily laden with moisture. Around her reared the circling heights, gloomy and forbidding—precipitous walls of rock, hoary cones and jagged ridges—all covered with a thick coating of volcanic ashes.

“Five fathoms, sir! Five fathoms less a half, sir!” sang out the quartermaster at the starboard bow, as he drew in the lead.

The ship swung to port, lifeboats were lowered, and over the side of the *Bertha* went some forty sacks of mail, which had been accumulating, during the past six months, at way ports, several tons of freight, and then the big Alaskan named

Jim descended Jacob's ladder and took his place in the last boat.

"This is the gloomiest place I've ever seen," said a woman, wearily, wiping the tear-mists from her eyes as the white speck upon the water became engulfed in gathering fog.

The other passengers heard, but heeded not. Dumb with the weight of sadness which for eternal ages had rested upon those virgin heights, they stood apart, unconcerned by human woes. Only the man in blue and gold understood, but he was old in the ways of the Northland, and immune to the spell which held other hearts in thrall.

Down dropped the fog, like a blanket of trickling mist, resting on the very rails of the steamship, and over went the anchor.

"Dear me! Another widow on my hands!" murmured the man in blue and gold as he came upon the figure of a weeping girl right on the bridge. But the intruder ignored the presence of the master, and he passed on, leaving her in command of his ship. But not alone, for inside the dark pilot house another officer stood on watch

while the little *Bertha* rode at anchor inside the "Gates of Hades."

Two days later the little vessel steamed into the forlorn harbor of ash-covered, heart-broken Kodiak, the end of her run. Desolation and despair reigned everywhere. Poor Kodiak! Time might efface the marks of destruction marring its once beautiful landscape, but the little passenger boat's last trip has been made; her day is done.

All through the drizzling rain of a weary Sabbath she loaded canned salmon, then, when the midnight hour struck, sadly and silently she glided from the old home port and faded away in the gloom of oblivion.

Good-bye, Little *Bertha*! Along the shores of enchantment lie the bones of thy sisters, hanging from the terrible fangs of Alaska's uncharted rocks and bleaching among the breakers inside her relentless jaws, but, thy fate is not yet.

THE S.S. DORA

SHE'S the queerest passenger boat afloat.
Her comforts are crude and few.
She's little and old, and her speed is slow, but
she's manned by a fearless crew.
She carries the mail, the fuel and food; and furs
and fish she brings back.
She links the great world with each lonely town
between Seward and Nushagak,—
With the fishing-stations and lighthouses on that
fog-bound, rock-strewn shore.
She's the only one that can make the run for thou-
sands of miles and more.
She's battered and blackened by countless storms;
she's hindered by fog and tides,
But she breasts the gale under steam and sail, and
through Shelikof Strait she rides
Where ashes rain down from the smoking peaks,
and seas o'er her decks are hurled.

She follows the coast through Unimak Pass, the stormiest trip in the world.

She's saved more lives and she's cheered more hearts than any Alaskan boat.

Then here's to the dearest, the safest, the queerest, the staunchest old steamer afloat!

THE MAN IN BLUE AND GOLD

HE'S the master, captain, skipper, of a steam-
ship, mailboat, clipper—

You can sail with him on the Alaska run—
And you'll find that he's no stranger to any kind
of danger,

And his work is never, never, never done;
For the midnight watch he's keeping when you're
in your cabin sleeping,

And the ocean is a-leaping at the sky;
For uncharted rocks he's sounding when the hid-
den reefs he's rounding,

Or for channels where the shifting sand-bars
lie.

I've seen him on a freighter sailing past a belching
crater,

Ashes raining from a sky all red and black;
Watched him 'mong the rocks and fog, stop his
ship to save a dog,

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And I've drifted with him through the wild ice-pack.

He's the man in blue and gold, and he's gallant,
brave and bold,

Ever ready with a courteous reply,
When my lady and her daughters sail Alaska's
witching waters

In a floating tourist palace in July.
He's a brother, tried and true, to the officers and
crew;

He's the friend of every traveler on the ship;
And the ladies always smile when he chats with
them awhile,

For they're the special favorites of the trip.
There's a twinkle in his eyes, but he's dignified
and wise,

For he wears a band of gold around his cap.
If his heart is still unbroken, you may know it is
a token

That his ship has never met with a mishap.

THE S.S. *ADMIRAL SAMPSON*

ALASKA! the land of enchantment! O!
when does the good ship sail?

It's some for pleasure and some for love and some
for the golden trail.

Many a brave heart feels tonight the lure of the
northern wild,

For the great Unknown is calling its own as a
mother calls her child.

All aboard for the gold fields, boys! She's
crowded with tourists gay.

Twelve hundred tons of freight in her holds, and
horses, outfits and hay.

A whistle, a cheer from the throng-lined pier, and
out from the maze of light,

Like an ocean hound o'er the crescent sound she
speeds through the silent night.

A cruise to the land of enchantment whose beauty
the soul beguiles.

How the waters shine as they twist and twine
through narrows and deep defiles!

Magnificence and immensity, and ever as on we
sweep .

Where the sunlight falls on the white sea-walls
the psalm of the rolling deep.

God's blessing we ask for the loved ones we leave
at each lonely place

Who are making Alaska the homeland of a loyal,
sturdy race.

Good luck to the men who are seeking their fortunes
in yellow sand,

To the fishers' bait as we land the freight, and
Fort Liscum's gallant band.

The westward run is a glorious one—Cook's Inlet
and Kodiak—

Where the *Sampson* rides the galloping tides to
Turnagain Arm and back

On the shores of the hunters' paradise, where bear
and caribou roam.

It's some for pleasure and some for treasure and
some for a place called HOME.

IN THE GULF OF ALASKA

“**S**AY! you know that fellow with the fine teeth and gray hair,—the one that eats at our table? Well, he’s from Chicago, and he intends to carry a piece of Alaska back in his pocket. Savvy?”

The boy’s eyes danced with mischief as he swung up to the rail beside me and slipped his arm over mine around the post.

“Well! What about him?”

“I’ve introduced him to that peroxide blonde in your cabin. That sweet creature with the poker-winnings all over her fingers. Told him—in the strictest confidence, of course—that she is a million-dollar widow on the lookout for number two, and that she thinks him the handsomest man on board.”

“You wicked boy!”

“Not me! The captain turned me out of the

pilot house, and told me to go look after the passengers for him and—”

“You’re doing it, eh!” said the gentleman referred to, who had just come round the corner of the lifeboat and overheard the youth’s last remark. He smiled indulgently at the young Alaskan, eyed me quizzically, and pointed to the sky.

“What’s the matter?” I enquired, straining my gaze in the direction indicated.

“A storm!” cried the youth, exultingly, slipping off the rail and sniffing the atmosphere. “We’re in the Gulf of Alaska and running into some nasty weather.”

Not a word said the captain, but his smile spoke volumes, and his shrug was more eloquent than words.

“I made him a banker with mines down in Mexico,” continued the boy as we promenaded the lower deck and watched the approaching storm. “Told her he considered her the best dresser in the whole bunch, and left them with their chairs hitched together on the upper deck. Bet you a quarter they’re holding hands by now.

Yes, run to cover, little dears! She's going to rock some pretty soon."

Our boat was rolling as he spoke, and passengers were gathering up their shawls and cushions. The air was growing colder, the sky black, and the wind whistled and moaned overhead; playful waves chased one another toward us, then lashed the vessel's sides in white fury. Afar off great masses of water rose high in the air, and billows like mountains came sweeping our way.

"Say! This is some storm!" cried the boy happily as we paused aft to watch it.

A great white breaker peeped over the rail and hissed at him, then a burst of salt spray struck me in the face. We climbed to the upper deck and had barely gained a footing on it, when the ship apparently tried to turn over, but, changing its mind, took a header into a big hole between two mountainous waves. I felt the steps going up into the air, and clutched the rail with all my might. A piercing scream rang out. The deck seemed to drop into space, and I discovered the blonde lady at my feet, and the limp figure of the

gentleman from Chicago hanging over the rail close by.

"Let me assist you, madam," said the gallant youth, bending over the prostrate lady as other passengers went rolling and scurrying along the heaving deck and busy stewards gathered up the chairs and stools. From a distance came the crying of little children, the sounds of slamming doors, and the laughter of other tourists, as the big ship strained in the grip of the gale and attempted to play leapfrog with the waves.

"Steward! steward!" cried the man beside me, in agonized tones, straightening himself with a sudden jerk and wildly clutching at the arm of a white-jacketed boy. "Is there a dentist on board? My God, man! I've dropped my teeth!"

I caught one glimpse of his ghastly countenance, then something struck me in the face. Frantically I snatched at the object and missed it. Out over the angry breakers sailed the gray cap of my hapless cabin mate, and pinned fast to it were the yellow curls so much admired by the surprised youth, whose arm now encircled their owner.

“Phew! Is everything coming to pieces?” he gasped, handing the bereaved lady over to the tender mercy of two tittering flunkeys, vainly endeavoring to tone their facial expressions to the proper degree of respectful commiseration. “The mermaids will be scrapping over them curls. Well, it’ll be lonesome at our table now. Going in? No? Think I’ll go play cribbage with the freight clerk.”

He disappeared, and I found myself alone on the deserted deck.

The storm was growing worse. My spirits rose. The ocean had always fascinated me, and I loved the winds and rain. Walking was impossible, and so I managed to wedge myself in between the guard rail and the end of a big lifeboat. The wet wind screamed and tore round me, the salt spray dashed over me, as the ocean shook its shaggy white mane and tried to swallow the ship. I laughed for very joy at the mad frolic and breathed deep draughts of intoxicating ozone. Earth and its cares were forgotten; sorrows and disappointments, hopes and ambitions, petty

jealousies and strife, all faded away until there was nothing left but a great world of waters and a battle royal between the elements of which I formed a part.

How long I stood there I do not know. The storm grew fiercer and fiercer. The wind shrieked and roared at the ocean, and the ocean bellowed at the wind. The great forces of nature warred in diabolical fury, and the frail shell beneath me, through which throbbed and palpitated a portion of that very force, chained and obedient to the touch of intelligence, rolled and pitched and tossed in the seething caldron of inky blackness.

Suddenly over the deafening din came a weird sweet melody, entrancing, exhilarating, overpowering the senses, and up from the surging deep rose an arm of phosphorescent ghosts. Again and again the spirits of the storm took shape and chanted a wordless song, until the meaning was burned into my brain. High on the crests of the circling waves rose the vapory forms, advancing, receding, flinging aloft their

dripping raiment, then bowed and sank into the trough of the sea.

“We are the soul-forms of those who have died,
Yielding their earth-selves to tempest and tide.
Thou art akin to us, child of the sea!
Cast off thy earth-chains! Come and be free!”

Above the symphony of the storm rose that wild song of the water sprites, and something within me leaped in answer to the call. Thousands of invisible hands stretched out toward me. In a frenzy of delirious joy I felt an irresistible power drawing me slowly to the waters, when a human touch broke the spell.

“Better go below!”

The man in blue and gold was at my side, his strong warm hand clasped mine. The wild grandeur of the scene changed. A dripping, shivering woman crawled down the steps and bumped unsteadily along the hallway.

“Phew! but you’re wet! Better let me hang your things over this radiator,” said the boy, unceremoniously pulling off my coat. “Say! Next time you contemplate suicide, let a fellow know,

will you? The old man's been worried, and that deck steward must have got rheumatism watching you. Honest! Cross my throat! The old man left word to be called if you showed symptoms of—"

The floor of the room suddenly inclined to starboard and I made a dive for my cabin without any apparent effort of my own, leaving the youth sitting on the radiator. But alas for repose! The warm blankets were barely tucked around my shaking form, when the lady in the berth below flopped out on the cabin floor.

I pushed the call button for the stewardess, and covered my head to shut out the sounds of the poor woman's distress. Someone entered the cabin.

"Lord a'mighty!" came a shrill scream from the berth above mine, "there's a *man* in the room! Get out of here, you beast!"

"Oh, shut up! You idiot! It's only the steward!" snapped the peroxide blonde, gratefully allowing the grinning white jacket to assist her into the berth.

I had a faint memory of many impressive epithets being exchanged between the old maid and the widow, and must have dropped off to sleep, but another wordy engagement aroused me. Perhaps it was the fault of the captain for allowing the ship to roll so violently; perhaps victims of *mal de mer* are unconsciously unreasonable; at any rate it was not until sounds of suppressed mirth reached me that I remembered the door was on hook, and that the boy's cabin faced ours.

About midnight I was startled out of a comfortable doze by the unusual clamor about me, and sensing danger, sat up so hurriedly that my head came in contact with the wire mattress of the upper berth. The spinster was on the floor of the cabin, frantically pulling on a cloth skirt; the widow embracing the door jamb. From the hallway came the sobbing of children mingled with a medley of prayers and curses, and over all, clear and sweet, came the words of a hymn in the boy's well-known voice. Then the noise stopped and a peculiar sensation told us we were sinking.

I sprang out of my berth, and was immediately crushed back again by the full weight of the helpless spinster, whose arms were imprisoned in her sheath skirt, from the waistband of which a haggard face, half framed with leaden hair-curlers, had just emerged.

"We're drowning!" shrieked the blonde as she disappeared in the hallway.

How I got out of that cabin is more than I can tell, but I reached the dining-room just in time to see the blonde lady collide with a steward carrying a tray of bottles. There was a crash of glass-ware, some lurid language, a mob of struggling humanity, then the boy's arm linked mine, and we turned to see the limp form of an old woman huddled on the red plush seat beside us.

"Phew! what's that?" ejaculated the boy.

"Sure, an' it's the tourist from Kansas City, sir, as thought the ship was going down, and she drank a pint of whiskey, sir, so she wouldn't be conscious while drowning," said the sympathetic night steward.

But at that instant I caught sight of the burly

form of the skipper, and dodged to escape his mirthful eye, confident that there was no immediate danger. The boy kept at my side.

"Lord a'mighty! there's a *woman* in the room! Get out of here, madam!" cried a masculine voice behind us.

The ship had made another unexpected lurch and precipitated a passerby head foremost into a dark cabin, from the doorway of which protruded the lower portion of the victim's form, at which the blonde lady was now vigorously tugging; but not until the floor regained its level could the kindly night steward raise the upper portion still encased in the sheath skirt.

"Say!" cried the boy in a stage whisper, craning his neck to peer through the half-opened door of another cabin, "I vow I'll never commit matrimony if—they all come to pieces like that. Does yours grow there?"

Following his gaze, I saw beneath a well-lighted mirror proof that the sea had not claimed all the aids to beauty and convenience, but the ocean is a reckless betrayer of human defects, and

if one-half the world lives by the woes of the other half, why should we complain?

The next morning the sun shone forth bright and beautiful, and the storm was forgotten. The boy could not let things rest, however, for that very night as we were leaving our cabin for dinner, he waylaid us and inquired innocently,

“Say! That man in the cabin next mine wants to know which of you three ladies left a calling card in his room last night.”

THE S.S. *ALAMEDA*

PACKED with precious human cargo,
To the Land of Promise bound,
Sails the stately *Alameda*
From the brilliant, lighted Sound,
Like a fairy palace floating
O'er a starlit summer sea,
Gay with music, incandescence;
Joyous with festivity.
To the northern Eldorado,
Fortune's golden smiles to greet,
Sails the great Alaskan liner,
Giant of the Northland fleet.

From fair Seward's rock-girt harbor,
Where snow-creviced mountains rise
In their soul-inspiring grandeur
To her glory-tinted skies,
O'er two thousand miles of water,
Wonder-walled and treasure-stored,

Where the wealth of bounteous nature
Is at man's command outpoured,
Homeward—homeward to the Southland,
Where the throngs of nations meet,
Speeds the great Alaskan liner,
Queen of all the Northland fleet.

OOMYAK

HE was only a savage, unloved and wild,
With a record far from good,
And the children shrank from the cruel gleam
In his slant eyes, streaked with blood.
On the desolate Bering coast he lived
Alone in a dark igloo,
And his heart beat fast when the teacher passed,—
Her eyes like the skies—mist-blue.
“Tchmai, Oomyak! tchmai!”
She said as she passed him by,
And once in a while she gave him a smile.
“Tchmai,* Oomyak! tchmai—
Oom-yak!”

She had smiled as she passed him that winter day,
And his heart was wildly glad
Till he saw her fall on the icy trail,
And the hounds were hunger-mad.
With the strength of a giant he fought the pack,—
Their terrible fangs drew gore;

* *Tchmai*—Hello! Good morning, or How do you do?

When they turned to feast on a wounded beast,
She fled through his igloo door.
“My brave Oomyak!” she cried,
And bound up his bleeding side,
And watched o’er him there with tenderest care.
The wolf-hounds howled outside—
Ow—o—ow!

He was only a savage, despised and feared,
But his heart was brave and true,
And he worshipped her as she knelt that night
By his bunk in the dark igloo.
It was all he had ever known of love;
For her he was glad to die;
And he passed away at the dawn of day,
With a smile, and a faint “Dhawai!”
“Dhawai,* Oomyak! Dhawai!”
She sobbed as the tide roared by,
And loud on the gale rose the pitiful wail
“Dhawai, Oomyak! Dhawai—
Oom-yak!”

* *Dha-wai*—That’s all! The Eskimo has no phrase to take the place of “good-by” except *dha-wai*.

TAKU GLACIER

SHEER from the waters rise the gloomy
heights,

Gaunt, black and bare, their snowy peaks en-
wrapped

In morning mists. Far into viewless space
The mountain ranges stretch and winding 'twixt,
Through dark defile and gorge and cañon grim,
The untamed serpent-monster of the north,
The last dread barrier in progression's path—
A living stream of potent, hoary waste
From ages past—slow gliding to the sea.

Nearer we drift through packs of moving ice,
The baby bergs, a ghostly squadron of
White derelicts by seagulls manned, to port
And starboard pass. Colder it grows, and right
Across our path the blue-seamed, crevassed face
Of Taku frowns, ghastly and terrible,
A mile of jagged, crystal precipice

With shafts and cones and pinnacles and towers
Three hundred feet above the water's edge,
Where playful seals hide in its fissured caves,
Its bouldered battlements alive with sprites
Stretching their white arms upwards unto God.

Nearer we drift, 'mid silence as of death,
Mute in the wonder of that dread embrace,
When suddenly the steamer's whistle booms
Defiant challenge to the wild Taku.
One instant on the trembling haze hang low
The vibrant notes, then leap through rock-walled
space.

Louder and louder grows the daring blast,
And all the heights around, range upon range,
Resentful of the white man's presence in
Their solitude, fling back the mocking cry,
And Taku answers ere the echoes die.

To fury maddened by the hateful taunts,
The serpent-monster with soul-freezing hiss
Prepares to strike, and vengeful demons ply
Their magic saws with ripping, cracking strokes.

“NEARER WE DRIFT MID SILENCE AS OF DEATH”



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The grinding roar to bellowing thunder swells,
And with a crash, which rends the mists above,
Ten thousand tons of ice are hurled into
The foamy depths.

But Taku's deadly bolt
Falls wide its mark; an iceberg drifts away,
And as we turn the morning sunbeams scale
The mountain walls, and all that wild, weird
scene
Is glory-tinted with a golden hue.
With flashing gems and sparkling diadems
Upon thy brow, farewell, O wild Taku!

A HERO OF THE WILD

ALL unawares the awful plague swooped
down,

Crushed in its grip the half-breeds of the town,
Then swiftly spreading, smote the native race,
And people fled in horror from the place.

In filthy hovels, comfortless and rude,
The helpless victims, destitute of food,
Despised, forsaken, in their misery lay,
While guards for quarantine *demand*ed pay.

But why bemoan the brutishness of greed?

God sent a helper suited to their need—

A lowly Indian, poor, of gentle mien.

Dark was his skin, but ah, his soul was clean!

“I go—I not afraid—my people call.

Each day I carry food and wood to all.”

No wages asked he, nor one wretch forgot.

Death's toll was heavy, but—it touched him not.

THE ALASKA FLYER

WITH bunkers filled, holds crammed with
supplies, and freight to her deck-rails
piled;

With passengers crowding her cabin-space, all
bound for the Yukon wild;

With fuel and food, and letters from home, for
each town along the way,

And a good-bye roar to the friends ashore, she
sails at the close of day,

Through channels and narrows and sounds and
straits, northwest for a thousand miles,

With the main-bluffs hugging her starboard rails,
port-prisoned by chains of isles.

O'er the reefs she rides on the swelling tides to
the land of nightless days,

Where the lone shore-camps and canneries hang
on piles in her silent bays.

Where the ice-floe breaks from her glacial shores,
 she doubles upon her track,
And loaded with bullion and silver fish, she brings
 the Alaskans back.
And ever through sunshine and storm she speeds,
 nor tarries by night nor day.
God stands by the man in the pilot-house, and the
 good ship knows the way.

THE WAGES OF SACRIFICE

MAHLUNA'S back was very tired. She eased the thong across her aching chest, shifted her burden somewhat, and plodded wearily over the open tundra. The wind was bitter cold; she had never felt it so keenly before, and her load had never seemed so heavy. But Mahluna's bones were old, so old that she had lost count of the snows by which her people numbered their years, and there were none left alive who could tell her.

How deep the snow was in the ravine! Thirty feet, the white trader said, and hard enough to bear the dog-teams. Mahluna was glad. It would save a long journey around the bluff and make the village hill much easier to climb. True, it ran by Petuk's igloo, a bleak and desolate place shunned by all native women, but Petuk would not harm *her*. Children could not be persuaded to pass that way, however, unless in the sleds with

their fathers, but children mocked Petuk because he cleaned the game and fish he sold to the white teacher at the Cape, and that was woman's work. A man should have more dignity.

Mahluna paused where the trails forked. She had walked from the Cape, five miles the trader said, where she went yesterday to deliver mochluks, and was bringing back two bundles of squirrel skins to be tanned for Koosak's new parka, and tea and pilot bread, and other things for the feast. Nahmekeka's big potlatch began on the morrow, the greatest time of all the year. Her wrinkled face grew very soft and sweet as she pictured her boy in his new attire. He wanted it for the dances in the other villages, for in reality Koosak was a young man of eighteen, with dreams of his own, though still a child to his fond old mother.

The love-thoughts warmed her heart, lightened her burden, and gave her courage to take the upper trail. In a few seconds she had rounded a slight eminence and now approached an old fish cache where Petuk was splitting firewood.

Mahluna had known his mother, who had died when Petuk was born. That was five snows before Koosak came. Petuk's father had been a bad man; he drank dewack, and had tried to put his hand on a woman. No native man might put his hand on any woman except his wife, and the offender had been promptly ostracized by the women of Nahmekeka. But he was dead now—took a sweat-bath and lay too long in the snow—and the youth had grown to manhood without the companionship of relatives.

What was Petuk doing? Mahluna came to a dead stop. Fifty paces ahead of her, right on the edge of the ravine, the youth's motionless figure was outlined against the dull horizon, one hand grasping the axe, the other still holding the piece of firewood, his head tilted backward and his gaze riveted upon the sky. But nothing could she see there to explain the strange attitude.

Before them, on the farther side of the ravine, reared the treeless hill, windswept and bare, save for the rotting fish houses and dark holes in the sides of snowy mounds which spoke to her of

home. But suddenly her knees trembled, her weary form sank to the ground and her gaze became strained.

In the leaden gray of the darkening sky a bright light had become visible, like a sunbeam from the cloudy zenith reaching downward to the village, and right in the center of the ray, suspended between heaven and earth, hung a huge hunting knife of dazzling brilliance with the point directly over the kashim. But that was not all. The startled woman saw the thin columns of gray smoke from the half-buried dwelling assuming mortal shapes which clustered around the sword. Mahluna tried to count them, but there were many times more than the fingers on both hands. She rubbed her eyes and began to count again, but the vision faded, and only the dull dark sky hung over Nahmekeka.

Sadly she rose and passed on, but Petuk did not appear to notice her, and the old woman wondered at the rapt expression in his bloodshot eyes.

Once before, long, long ago, when she had many small children clinging to her hands, a terrible

sickness had swept over Nahmekeka, carrying off great numbers of her people. Was another calamity coming?

Pausing before a snowy mound somewhat larger than its fellows, the tired traveler bent her head and shuffled through the low opening into a circular room ten feet in diameter. The earth-walls and floor were thick with hoar frost. Mahluna pulled a small thong hanging through a tiny hole in the inner door, which opened outward when the latch was thus released, groped her way through the well-known passage, and dropped her bundles in the inner room, where a smiling crowd greeted her. Wearily she sank to the floor and wiped her eyes.

This was the mansion-house of Nahmekeka, for Mahluna was the richest as well as the oldest woman in the village, and many lived on her bounty. The walls, ceiling and floor were of wood; there was a pane of real glass for a window, and a stove of sheet iron. Three wooden bunks nailed to the walls served as beds and wardrobes, and in these were stacked piles of

skins and pillows, and bundles of rags which were the surplus clothing of the family. Mahluna's own bunk contained a feather bed, and a patch-work quilt of fur clippings, for she was the tanner, tailor and shoemaker of the tribe, and no one in all the land could make such soft, beautiful garments.

A slender, sunny-faced youth was making shavings by the little stove, and soon the tea kettle boiled. Mahluna untied her bundles and took out of one a red handkerchief containing tea. Anuska put the board on the floor, spread out the teacups, and the happy family squatted round it for their evening meal.

It was a large family for so small a room, and eight persons usually slept in it, but Eskimos were accustomed to cuddling close and did not mind the foul air. Tonight there were two extra. Olga and her white baby had returned. Mahluna did not approve of Olga, a worthless native woman who came and went with feasts and famines and never did any work, but in her joy at being home again, and in the sense of plenty which a well-

supplied larder gave her, she included the outcast in her smile of welcome as the hot tea was handed round by Anuska.

Mahluna had been a burden-bearer all her life. Her dark face, though tanned and weather-wrinkled, was very pleasant to behold, and her cheeks still showed the pink flush of health,—or was it consumption? The Government doctor said all the people of Nahmekeka had consumption, but the natives were not half as much afraid of the disease as they were of the stuff he burned in their houses to destroy the germs.

The natives of Nahmekeka did not like to work; it was much pleasanter to sit and drowse. What was the use of getting wood so long as they could keep warm without it? By shutting out all the air and sleeping close together they could do without fires in very cold weather. Wood was hard to get.

Once, when a white man had asked them why they did not shovel the snow away from their doors, the chief had answered, "What need? By'mby sun melt it, water run down hill. What

for native work?" Then he knew why they always built their villages upon hills.

But Mahluna was different. She was born a worker, and had always so many dependent upon her industry that she had never yet had time to quit. Though declared by some of the squawmen to be generations ahead of her people in sense and thrift, Mahluna was still a native of Nahmekeka when it came to sharing her cheer with others, and you could no more have kept the generous love out of her smile than the brightness out of a sunbeam. Whatever Mahluna had, the others knew they might share.

When the white trader at the Cape expostulated with her for marrying a half-dead consumptive that summer, Mahluna smiled and said her man had been a good wood-getter and trapper in his time. She had taken him for what he *had been*, not for what he now was. But Mahluna was used to getting married; this was her fifth man, and—well, the truth of the matter was, he had been crowded out of his daughter's house and didn't have a place in which to lay his head.

Of course she had to take Syuk with him, but Syuk was a sick boy who didn't have a relative in the world. Why should he be homeless when there was an empty corner under her own bunk?

In a sense, Anuska belonged to her, she being the widow of the man who had formerly been the husband of Mahluna's own daughter; and when Anuska took another husband, it was only natural that she should bring him to Mahluna's house, especially as he had no home of his own and was too sick to work. But Anuska was a good woman; she did the washing, gathered the berries, made beautiful grass baskets for the white trader, and took care of the seal-meat and blubber when her husband's brother, who also lived with them, went hunting. She had much better have married the brother, but he did not arrive upon the scene until too late. However, women were scarce since white men had got into the habit of taking them for trial-wives, and her husband couldn't live very long. Anuska's chances were good.

Nahmekeka was merry tonight. Yes, many of them had seen the vision in the sky, but in the

excitement of preparing for the big potlatch on the morrow it was forgotten. In the morning all the people from the surrounding villages would arrive. There would be feasting and dancing for two whole days, and they would be as happy as if they owned the world.

The white trader at the Cape said they were fools. White men were never contented. They owned so much that it was beyond the power of natives to enumerate their belongings, and yet they always wanted more. In the bigness of her heart, Mahluna pitied the white trader. She pitied the white teacher at the Cape also, for not having a man of her own to get her wood and water. How any woman could *live alone* in such a tremendous building as the schoolhouse, the old woman could not comprehend. That was the worst thing about the jail—there was a jail away over the mountains—it was *so lonesome*. One of her husbands had been there once. They kept him for many moons, but he didn't know what for. It was warm, he told her, and plenty grub, but he had to stay alone

all time, and that was bad. White men had strange ways.

It was the day of the big dance. Nahmekeka was full of children and dogs and sleds. The men were to sleep in the kashim, or council-house, for there wasn't room to pack another human being into the igloo-dwellings. Early in the morning the natives had bestirred themselves. Wood and food were plentiful.

Mahluna's old heart was very proud when she sat among her people and their friends in the kashim and watched her beloved son go through the muscular contortions of the native dance.

What a crowd! The big circular room was packed with men, women and children, wedged close together on the rough seats around the dark walls, standing, kneeling and squatting, and as many more crouching on the floor out of reach of the dancers. Four young men in gorgeous apparel beat the skin drums with huge pompoms. Four others, their half-naked bodies greased and shining, leaped, doubled, swayed and writhed to the

music while a chorus of trained voices chanted the virtues of the dancers in a guttural monotone. In the center of the room, between the dancers, the presents were heaped together in one big pile, traps, knives, robes, dog-harness, guns,—indeed, about all the wealth of Nahmekeka, for every performer and host were required to contribute to the collection. This heap of treasures was now on display, by the aid of blubber dips stuck against the dark walls, to the admiring gaze of the delighted assembly.

It was a brave sight. Koosak was the nimblest dancer of them all; likewise his gun was the costliest present to be danced away. Surely no mother in the land was as happy as she who that night wiped tears of joy from her smarting eyes. Poor eyes! weak with much sewing in the dim light of her humble home.

When the Konakers started for home four days later—they had honored their Nahmekeka neighbors with a longer visit than usual on account of the plenitude of hospitality—carrying with them the presents drawn in the grand lottery, all the able-bodied Nahmekekaites accompanied them.

He who gets must give. Konak, having drawn first in the lottery, must give the first return dance. From there the merrymakers would go the rounds of all the villages, feasting and dancing and exchanging presents, with never a thought for the cold hungry days to come.

The mercury was falling. Over his entire wardrobe of cotton shirts and underwear, Koosak pulled on a pair of new overalls, which his mother had earned for him and bought from the white traders, wound pieces of clean gunny sack around his feet and ankles, stuffed the soles of his new sealskin mochluk with dried grass, and slipped his feet into them. He smiled lovingly at his mother as he fondled the red yarn tassels, for Mahluna spared no pains when it came to making footgear for her only son, and Koosak's smile grew sunnier as he donned the new parka, gay with red-fox tails around the shoulders, and squirrel tails dangling everywhere. The cuffs and hood were lined with ermine and bordered with wolverine; the gauntlets of his muskrat mittens were beaded in red and yellow. Oh, he was a young

chief! Almost a man! Mahluna stilled her fluttering heart and bade him a silent good-bye.

Nahmekeka's potlatch was over.

That night the mercury dropped to forty below. The wind swept down from the north and howled around the snowy mounds on Nahmekeka's desolate hill. Mahluna's husband died.

The woodpiles were gone. The visitors' dogs had eaten all the fish. The larders of Nahmekeka were empty.

One by one the aged, the crippled, and the chronic consumptives crawled from their fireless dwellings, struggled through the blizzard, and crouched around Mahluna's little stove to partake of the funeral feast.

It was Petuk, the bad man, who found little Syuk's stiff form on the edge of the ravine, where the child had gathered together a bundle of brushwood by snapping off scraggy branches protruding through the snow, and carried it home to the mourners. It was Petuk, the renegade, whose axe and gun had not been donated to the pot-

latch, who replenished the widow's woodpile, refilled her larder with ptarmigan and grouse, and dug the graves for those whose rash exposure to the blizzard made that funeral feast their own. It was Petuk, the despised, who brought tea, rice and hardtack from the teacher's supplies to the starving helpless; lighted their fires, melted snow in their kettles, and cooked delicious broth for them.

One by one the sleighs returned. Men had caught cold from sleeping in the kashims. Some of them had never waked again. Those who came back said they had been unlucky in the drawing of presents. The guns and axes had gone elsewhere. Koosak had been sick; the pain went to his head, and the native medicine man, as was the custom in such cases, opened a vein, and—they buried him in all his fine furs and put up a wooden cross. What more could a mother want?

Mahluna sat on the floor, staring into space. Petuk had more graves to dig. The dogs were growing very fierce.

"You get wood!" said Mahluna to a man squatting beside her stove.

"What use? Me see big knife in sky. Mebbe me die soon," answered the man cheerfully. The others nodded and waited expectantly.

"You all fool!" said Petuk, the bad man. "Me get wood, me hunt, *me live!*" Petuk went home.

The widowed Anuska cleaned the traps which her husband's brother had drawn in the lottery at Konak, and went with him to dwell among the tattooed women of the Kuskokwim.

Olga remembered the food in the cabins of the white men, and resolved to take another chance. She tied her starving baby in a shawl, slung it to her back, knotted the corners of the shawl across her chest, slipped on her parka and tramped to the Cape. Creeping up stealthily to the door of the schoolhouse, in the deepening dusk, she untied the knots, placed the sleeping child on the upper step, rapped at the door, *and fled*.

It was the white man's legacy to the Alaska School Service.

Mahluna's fire went out.

Weary and famished, the old fur-worker returned to the mansion-house of Nahmekeka, foodless and fireless for the first time in its history, to find it also deserted. She had made the rounds of the village, searching in vain for her people—every igloo was silent. Only the dogs responded to her calls, some with glazing eyes and emaciated forms, others slinking, wolf-like, from the cemetery as she passed by.

There was yet another igloo—Petuk's—but she was too tired to walk there tonight. On the morrow she would go, yes, and she was quite sure of welcome. No woman had crossed the threshold of that dwelling since Petuk was a child. Poor, motherless Petuk! Her heart warmed to the lonely youth who had done so much for her since Koosak went away. Yes, she would go to him and comfort him, for Petuk with his strange ways, learned from the whites with whom he mingled much, was all that was left in Nahmekeka.

Wrapped in her furs the old woman dozed

while the wind screamed and roared without, and the ice-tide piled up the crunching boulders against the treeless bluff. Presently she waked, her heart fluttering. *Koosak was beside her.* Timidly she stretched forth her hand to touch her beloved son, but could not find him. The room was dark and silent and cold,—oh, so cold! Closer she drew the covers to still the ache in her chest, and tried to count the number of crosses she must ask Petuk to put up in the cemetery, but her memory grew confused, and again she dozed.

Where was Koosak taking her? Carefully he lifted her, furs and all, and deposited his burden in the sleigh. Yes! *it was real*, this time. She felt the strong warm hand linger on her own, the stinging wind against her cheek, the odor of broth and a delicious sense of warmth, then all grew dark again.

When Mahluna waked a little face was pressed against hers, little arms were clutching her neck. She opened wide her eyes. Petuk was standing

beside her, a bowl of steaming broth in his hand, and Olga's baby nestled against her breast.

"I'm glad Petuk found you, Mahluna," said the white teacher, gently, as she placed the cup of hot tea within reach, "I want you to take care of this baby for me, and to line Petuk's new overalls and jacket with squirrel skins, *all same white man*. You're going to live at the Cape for the remainder of the winter."

Mahluna's eyes swam with tears as she pressed the little waif to her loving heart, and no man in all the land had neater, warmer garments than he who took the place of Koosak in her new household. In the joy of her new found duties Nah-mekeka was forgotten, but the old woman never quite understood Petuk's enforcement of the white teacher's rule, NO WORK, NO EAT, when pensioners strayed to the door of their former Lady Bountiful.

Do you see those violets? Delicate, dainty, beautiful blue violets? Strange to find flowers of such surpassing sweetness on so desolate a hill?

No! Violets often bloom in lonely byways; they are the tears of those who gave their lives for love. That crumbling hill was once catacombed with human dwellings, but the Reaper passed, and like leaves before the autumn wind the flickering souls drifted into eternity.

All along the inhospitable shores of Bering Sea you may find those crosses marking the homes of a fading race.

Step lightly! Mahluna's heart lies beneath your feet!

THE HOMELAND UP YONDER

THERE'S a land, 'way off up yonder,
Of which some of us are fonder
Far than of the land to which we owe our birth;
And though no-accounts berate it,
And the rogues pretend to hate it,
And its enemies will oft dispute its worth,
It's a curious contradiction,
And its story reads like fiction.
It's the newest, wildest, richest land on earth.

There are foodless desert spaces
Peopled by barbaric races,
Where the awful polar blizzard ever blows.
There are solitudes appalling
Where strange manitous are calling
Human souls to hopeless exile 'mong the snows.
There are horrors unbelievable
And wonders inconceivable,
And it's there the little yellow nugget grows.

100 THE HOMELAND UP YONDER

There are tidal-waves tremendous,
Glacial ranges most stupendous:

There are happy homes and garden spots galore,
Thriving cities, mighty rivers,
Though at times the earth-crust quivers

And a mountain top goes skyward with a roar.
Where the golden sunlight dallies
In its million-acre valleys,
There is coal enough to last for evermore.

There are symphonies entrancing
When the water-sprites are dancing

With the moonbeams 'mong the starry clouds
on high,
And the concert grows sonorous

When the earth-fiends swell the chorus,

And the furies from the north go shrieking by;
Then the forest trees are crashing,
And the thunderous surges lashing,

And the ocean shouts Hosanna to the sky.

There are starving humans dying
'Mid prolific harvests crying

To be garnered by the sweat upon man's
brow,—

They have held the land for ages—

Fair and just are nature's wages—

And the wilderness is calling for the plow.

Pent-up forces fret and clamor

For release by spade and hammer,

And the white man's going to have his innings
now.

It's a desert to the shirker,

And a HOMELAND to the worker,—

For the man who perseveres can make it pay.

There are lone peaks grim and hoary

In sky-seas of golden glory,

And there's violets blooming all along the way.

Just remember, when you're staking,

It's an "empire in the making,"

And the structure won't be finished in a day.

THE GREAT NORTHWEST

BUT yesterday a region unexplored,
These shores a wilderness, and Puget Sound
A name to half the nation meaningless,
A borderland whence stretched a silent sea
And ghostlike rose a white peninsula—
The vague, the wild Northwest—a paradise
The Indian called his own.

Far in the waste
A white man drowsed beside his camp fire lone,
And o'er his sleeping senses softly stole
The spell of Manitou. Weird visions passed,
And sougling sounds and whispering melodies
Took shape in words and swelled into a song.

“O white man, come! for we have waited long
The prisoned souls of power. O bring thy key!
Unlock these secret cells and set them free,
And thou shalt have an empire for reward,
And hoards so rich the world shall envy thee.

“For æons past in subterranean vaults
The hoary ancestors of these tall trees
Have lain a-ripening, and Earth’s great veins
Are bursting with red life-blood mineralized.
Prolific life runs riot in these depths.
In the unquickened soil ’neath this white crust
The fruitage of futurity lies hid.
Unsickled harvests wave ’neath sunny skies
On ice-bound shores where phantom cities rise.”

The trapper smiled. The Indian sensed his doom.
The wild beast slunk in terror to his lair,
Triumphant rose the song of destiny,
And far the night-winds bore the luring call.

“O white man, come! wave thy enchanted wand
And Earth shall yield to thee most bounteously.
Thy shining steel shall pierce these mountain-
sides,
Thy lightning-chariots flash from gorge to gorge,
Thy thunders echo ’mong the glacial peaks,
Thy white-winged monsters sail the silvery seas.
Thy forest-monarch, fashioned into homes,

Shall crown the looming bluffs of sound and
bay,
And line the tidal-edge with wharves and mills
Powered by unnumbered streams from crystal
hills.

“O conqueror, come! and when to-morrow’s sun
Shall melt the curtain of obscurity
Which veils the splendors of the frigid zone,
The Cræsan wealth of this white wilderness
Shall be thine own.”

Such was the prophecy
Of yesterday, the siren song of hope
Which lured the bold adventurer forth to dare
The horrors of the pristine solitude,—
To stalk Apollyon’s ghastly battle-ground
And war with foes inanimate; subdue
The voids ’twixt chaos and utility,
And wrest dominion from the boreal waste.

The long night passed, yet e’er the dawn’s pale
glow

Lit up the spectral land, another song,
 More potent far than phantasy or dream,
 Went reeling round the world, the song of *gold*,
 And nations turned their wondering gaze toward
 The Great Northwest. Gold! gold! *Alaskan*
gold!

And tens of thousands swarm the unknown shores
 Where Zetes and his grisly warriors,
 Æonian guards of Nature's treasure vaults,
 Hide 'mong the unblazed trails.

Savage and grim

The stubborn contest for supremacy
 Waged by the forces of Inertia
 'Gainst the resistless hosts of Human Zeal.
 But Cosmic currents, bursting from the Pole,
 Circle the zone, sweep through the human heart
 And make invincible the hero-soul.
 Untrammelled by reward of fame or pelf,
 The conqueror finds fellowship with God.
 Attuned to danger it appalls him not;
 Inured to hardship and serene his lot.
 Aurora smiles, the grisly foes take wing,
 The Arctic breath is shorn of deadly sting.

The vanquished desert spurns its blighted race
And lo! the empire-builder takes his place.

We of the new Northwest, who know and love
The matchless beauty of our rugged land,
Its witchery of scintillating charms
And mystic iridescent tints and tones;
The bigness of its white infinitude,
The marvel of its awful majesty,
Terrific wrath, remorseless cruelty,
And blatant frenzy of its savage storms;
The dumbness of its sombrous solitude,
Its iron chill, mirage and lethargy;
The thralldom of its mocking lures and spells,
The pulsing life, revivifying power
And joyous uplift of its vigorous clime,—
We know its promises of opulence,
The glad content of cherished hopes fulfilled.
And still the cry, more clamorous than before,—
“God, give us men to tame the wilderness,—
Brave men and strong, and women sweet and
pure,
Steadfast in love, with courage to endure.”

From Earth's dark caverns and from Ocean's
depths

Stupendous forces still beg liberty,

And treasures inexhaustible reveal

Their hiding-places to intelligence.

We see the vast Pacific's watery waste

Walled round with opportunities. God smiles

Alike on frozen shores and sun-kissed isles.

"God, give us men to tame the wilderness,

To make Alaskaland a sovereign State;

Men with God-souls to bide the desert test,

And build the empire of the *new Northwest!*"

THE COLORS OF THE NORTH

WHEN God Almighty fashioned out this
Western Hemisphere,
He packed his treasures 'mong the ice, and stored
them 'way up here,
Rewards, a few score centuries hence, for those
brave hearts and true
Who's shape Alaska's destiny, and plan, and dare,
and *do*.

Eternal snows and glacial bars the human tide held
back,
Till lure of yellow sheen revealed the precious
veins of black.
Now barriers melt, and thousands see Alaska's
smiling face,
And find in this white wilderness a pleasant dwell-
ing-place.
We blazed Alaska's desert wastes. Her welfare is
our own,

THE COLORS OF THE NORTH 109

And those who follow in our path shall reap what
we have sown.

Then, welcome! welcome! noble souls who camp
upon our track

And wear the colors of the North—the white, the
gold, the black.

AU REVOIR

AN inland sea of opalescent sheen,
Thick fringed with shining sands and sombre tints

Of forest green, winds in and out among
The foothills bold. The setting sun lights up
Each sheltered nook where camp and cot, half hid
'Mong sylvan shade, reveal the haunts of man;
Its deeper glow illumines the rocky coves
Where bubbling waterfalls play hide and seek,
And sportive fish leap o'er the tiny waves.

Dark and majestic, on yon farther shore,
Ridge upon ridge, the hills of God arise,
Their jagged peaks and snow-seamed crater-domes
In blue-black outline 'gainst a sea of fire.
Upon the deck, as Night unfolds her charms,
The silent watcher sits, with soul attuned
To all the myriad voices of the North,
And from the solitude is borne to him
The soft sweet notes of Nature's goodnight hymn.

